

REMARKS

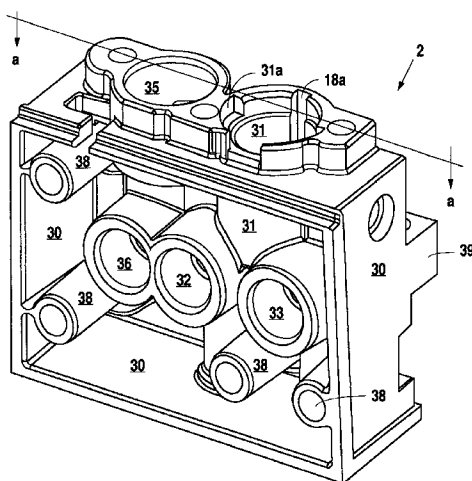
Claims 1-6, 20-22, 24, 28-34, 36, 37-48, and 50-52 are pending in the application. Claims 7-19, 23, 25-27, 35, 37, 44, and 49 have been cancelled without prejudice pursuant to a restriction requirement. Further, claims 38-42 have been allowed. No claims are amended with this response.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §102(e)

Claims 1-6, 20-22, 24, 28-34, 36, 43, 45-47, and 50-52 have been rejected over Schroeder et al. This rejection is overcome in view of the following remarks.

The Examiner asserts that Schroeder discloses a manifold block containing at least one cell that has an outlet opening and at least first and second inlet openings (Office Action, pg. 3). The selection manifold of Schroeder et al. is also said to include a selector mechanism actionable between a first position and a second position, and a lock to prevent the unintentional change of the selector mechanism between the first and second positions. *Id.* The applicants assert that the selection manifold of Schroeder et al. does not anticipate claim 1 at least because claim 1 calls for the two inlet openings and the outlet opening to be on the same face of the manifold block and on either side of the outlet opening.

As shown by Schroeder et al. in Figs. 1-3, a supply valve (4) and an inlet switch assembly (3) are inserted into the manifold block (2). The inlet switch assembly can be rotated to create a fluid pass for either carbonated water entering from inlet (32) or plain water, entering from inlet (33). These water inlets, located on one side of the housing (30), are shown by Schroeder et al. in FIG. 2 below. A syrup inlet (36) allows syrup to be introduced to the syrup cavity (35) adjacent to the water cavity (31).



A single water outlet (34) on the opposite side of the housing (30) from the water inlets is shown below in FIG. 1. The inlet switch assembly (3) inserts into the water cavity (31).

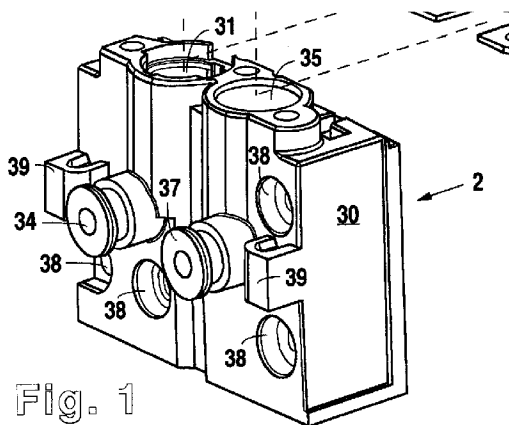
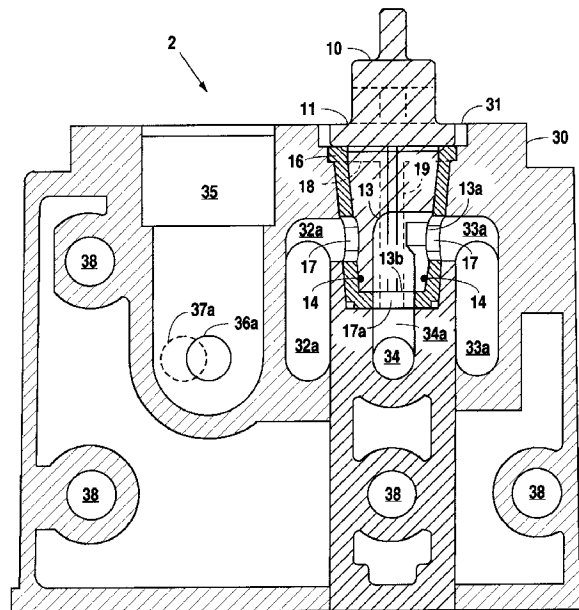


Fig. 1

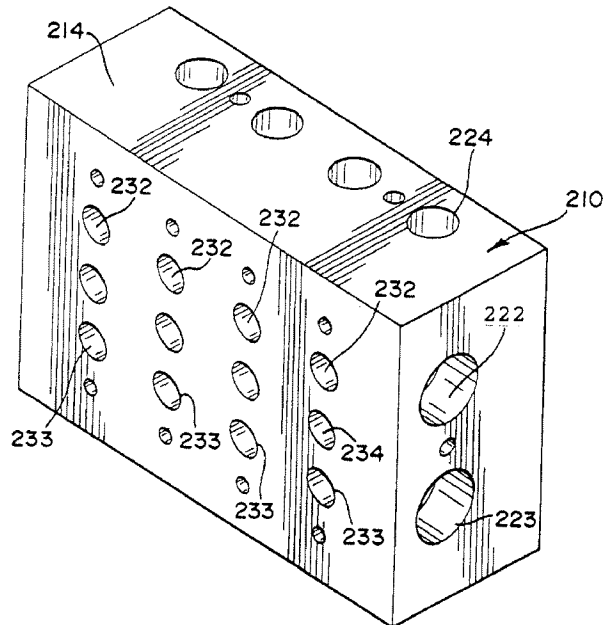
In FIG. 3 of Schroeder et al., reproduced below, the selector turn dial (10) on the inlet switch assembly is turned to create a channel in which either plain water or carbonated water can be channeled to the single outlet opening (34) located on the opposite side of the block from the carbonated water inlet (32) and the plain water inlet (33).



As shown above, the device of Schroeder et al. has two inlets for the water cell on one side of the housing, and a single outlet for the water cell on an opposite side of the housing. The syrup cell has a single inlet (36) and a single outlet (37). Conversely, the syrup valve assembly (4) is inserted into syrup cavity (35). The syrup turn dial (20) can be rotated to allow syrup to flow between the syrup inlet (36) and the syrup outlet (37). Accordingly, Schroeder et al. disclose a block having two cells, one cell has a single outlet and a single inlet, and the other cell has two inlets on one side of the housing and a single outlet on the opposite side of the housing.

In contrast to the assembly disclosed by Schroeder et al., claim 1 recites a selection manifold having an outlet opening and at least first and second inlet openings on a face thereof. The first and second inlet openings reside on either side of the outlet opening. An exemplary embodiment is illustrated in FIG. 20 of the applicants' drawing (shown below) and described in paragraphs 0075-0076 of the applicants' specification.

FIG.20

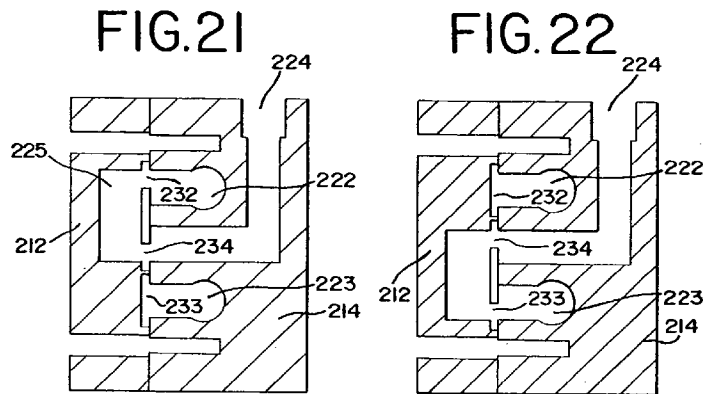


Depending upon the position of the selector mechanism, water flows out of either opening (232) or (233), and into outlet opening (234). All of these openings are located on the same face of the manifold body. Accordingly, claim 1 distinguishes over Schroeder et al.

The applicants further assert that Schroeder et al. do not suggest or disclose a lock to prevent the unintentional change of the selector mechanism. The Examiner apparently refers to the guide slot (31a) shown by Schroeder et al. in FIG. 2. The applicants assert that the guide slot merely restricts the rotation of selector (5) and does not lock the selector "to prevent unintentional change of the selector mechanism between the first and second positions," as recited by claim 1.

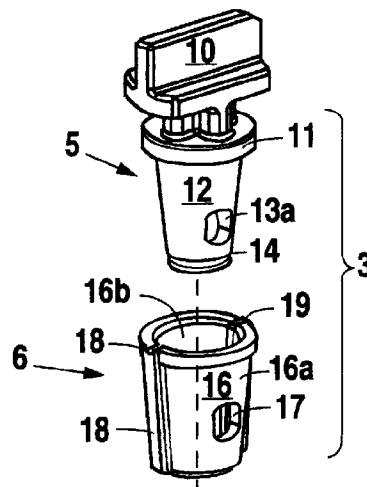
Claims 2-3 are allowable in view of the direct and indirect dependence from claim 1.

Claim 4 recites a selector manifold including a selector mechanism that comprises a cap with a channel along a face thereof. FIGs. 21 and 22 of the applicants' drawing are shown below.



The illustrated exemplary embodiment shows the cap (212) positioned along a face of the manifold body (214). The cap (212) is actionable between a first position against the face of the manifold block (FIG. 21), or a second position of the face against the manifold block (FIG. 22). A channel (225) is positioned along a face of the cap and provides a pathway between an inlet and the outlet. The applicants' claimed cap structurally and operationally differs from the rotating selector body (5) of Schroeder et al.

Rather than a channel along a face of a cap, as shown below in a partial view of FIG. 1, Schroeder et al. disclose a selector body (12) having an opening (13a) to allow water to enter into the interior space of the selector body.



The applicants assert that the term “cap” in claim 4 is synonymous with “a cover” and, thus, structurally differs from the cylindrical rotating selector body disclosed by Schroeder et al. Accordingly, claim 4 distinguishes over Schroeder et al.

Claims 5 and 6 are allowable in view of their direct and indirect dependence from claim 4.

Claim 20, recites a beverage selection manifold having a removable cap. The removable cap includes a channel and has a face that is positionable against an outer wall of the cell in a first cap position and a second cap position. As discussed above, Schroeder et al. do not suggest or disclose a cap that is positionable against an outer wall of a cell. Further, the selector body (5) of Schroeder et al. is inserted into water cavity (31) and, once inserted, the selector body stays in the cavity and rotates to select either plain water or carbonated water. In contrast, the removable cap recited in claim 20 has a face that is repositionable against an outer wall of the cell to select either carbonated or plain water. Accordingly, claim 20 distinguishes over Schroeder et al.

Claims 21 and 22 are allowable in view of their dependence from claim 20.

Claim 24, recites a method of switching a supply line to a dispensing valve. The user selects the fluid supply to a beverage valve by positioning a cap against an outer wall of a manifold body. The applicants incorporate their forgoing remarks pertaining to the claimed cap herein. Accordingly, the claimed method is not suggested or disclosed by Schroeder et al.

Claim 28 recites a beverage selection manifold including a plurality of removable caps. Each of the caps includes a channel therein positionable against an outer wall of one of the sections of the manifold body. The applicants incorporate their forgoing remarks pertaining to the claimed cap herein. Accordingly, Schroeder does not suggest or disclose the claimed beverage selection manifold.

Claims 29-31 are allowable in view of their dependence from claim 28.

Claim 32 recites a beverage selection manifold that includes multiple cells. Each cell has a first and second inlet orifices and first and second outlet orifices. In contrast to the beverage selection manifold recited by claim 32, as described above, Schroeder et al. discloses two inlets for the water cell on one side of the housing, and a single

outlet for the water cell on an opposite side of the housing. Accordingly, the assembly of Schroeder et al. does not have the claimed first and second inlet orifices and the claimed first and second outlet orifices. The function of the claimed detachable body is to create a flow path between the first and second inlet orifices and first and second outlet orifices. In contrast, as described above, Schroeder et al. has a rotational inlet switch assembly that is rotated between two positions to alternatively provide a flow path from one or two inlet openings to a single, common outlet opening.

Claims 33, 34, and 36 are allowable in view of their dependence from claim 32.

Claim 43 recites a beverage selection manifold that includes a manifold body having multiple cells. Each cell has first and second inlet orifices and first and second outlet orifices. As discussed above, Schroeder et al. fail to suggest or disclose a cell having first and second inlet orifices and first and second outlet orifices. Further, claim 43 recites that at least one detachable body is configured to stop fluid flow from a first outlet orifice in a first position and from a second outlet orifice in a second position.

Claims 45-47 and 50 are allowable in view of their dependence from claim 43.

Claim 51 recites a beverage selection manifold that includes multiple cells, where each cell has first and second inlet orifices and first and second outlet orifices. Further, the first and second inlet orifices are connected to respective first and second elongated channels. The beverage selection manifold further includes at least one detachable body configured to stop fluid flow from a first outlet orifice in a first position and from a second outlet orifice in a second position as described above, Schroeder et al. fails to suggest or disclose a cell having the recited first and second inlet orifices and first and second outlet orifices.

Claim 52 is allowable in view of its dependence from claim 51.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claim 48 has been rejected over Schroeder et al. This rejection is overcome in view of the following remarks.

Claim 48 directly depends from claim 43. Accordingly, the applicants' foregoing remarks pertaining to claim 43 and Schroeder et al. are incorporated by reference

herein. The applicants assert that claim 48 is allowable at least in view of the recitation in claim 43 of a manifold body that includes multiple cells, where each cell has first and second inlet orifices and first and second outlet orifices. Accordingly, the beverage selection manifold of claims 43 and 48 both structurally and functionally differs from the assembly disclosed by Schroeder et al.

The applicants assert that one skilled in the art would not find it obvious to somehow transform the assembly of Schroeder into a beverage selection manifold serviced by two inlet orifices and two outlet orifices, and in which flow channels are created by positioning a detachable body with respect to the inlet orifices and outlet orifices.

Allowed Claims

The allowance of claims 38-42 is acknowledged.

The applicants have a novel and non-obvious contribution to the art of beverage selection manifold function and design. The claims at issue distinguish over the cited reference and are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, such allowance is now earnestly requested.

Respectfully submitted,

/Jasper W. Dockrey/
Jasper W. Dockrey
Registration No. 33,868
Attorney for Applicants

BRINKS HOFER GILSON & LIONE
P.O. BOX 10395
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60610
(312) 321-4200